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Agenda 06-04-07

Municipal Partnership Act **Advocacy Kit**²⁰⁰⁷

May 15, 2007



Dear Local Leader,

As you know, the Municipal Partnership Act filed by the Governor in February would provide cities and towns with real options to reduce reliance on the property tax and new tools to control local expenses. Although the GIC and pension provisions of the bill have been well received by the Legislature, the essential revenue provisions have stalled, and it is imperative that all legislators hear loud and clear that ALL parts of the bill must move if they truly want to end the property tax and fiscal crisis that has hit so many cities and towns.

The partnership legislation includes a local sales tax on meals, expansion of the room occupancy excise, closure of the telecommunications property tax loophole, a local option process for negotiating with unions regarding joining the state health insurance plan, and the transfer of assets of underperforming local pension systems to the state Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT) for investment. All these provisions can help cities and towns close the widespread and enduring gaps in local budgets caused by slow-growing municipal revenues and intractable growth in budget-buster costs.

This **Municipal Partnership Advocacy Kit** was prepared to help you make the case to your legislators, local taxpayers, businesses, community groups and the media that enactment of a meaningful Municipal Partnership Act must be a top priority this year. With the House and Senate nearing completion of the fiscal 2008 state budget, this is the ideal time to act before the Legislature's expected summer break at the end of July. Public hearings have been held on all the major parts of the Governor's bill. The next step is for House leaders to make the Municipal Partnership Act a priority.

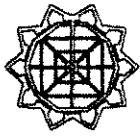
The *Advocacy Kit* includes a variety of materials that you can act on right away: A list of Action Steps for you to take; an MPA Endorsement form; a Model Resolution for local adoption; Summaries, highlights and talking points on the MPA; a Meal Tax Fact Sheet; a Revenue Spreadsheet to see how much revenue the MPA would generate for you; a Sample Letter to Your Legislators; a Tally Sheet for Polling Your Legislators; a Sample Press Release; and a Sample Letter to the Editor.

The next few weeks are critical in winning support for a Municipal Partnership Act. Please make sure that your Legislators and your residents know that you support new options and tools for local government, and that action is needed this year.

Please visit our Web site at www.mma.org to download an electronic copy of this packet, or contact MMA Deputy Legislative Director John Robertson if you have any questions. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Geoffrey C. Beckwith
Executive Director



ACTION STEPS TO WIN THE MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP ACT

- Endorse: 1) Publicly Endorse the MPA and Join MPA Website.
(See form in Advocacy Kit - go to <http://devalpatrick.com/mpa.php>)
- 2) Adopt and Publicize Local Resolution.
(See form in Advocacy Kit)
- 3) Determine What the MPA Would Mean to Your Community.
(See spreadsheet in Advocacy Kit);
- Lobby: 4) Call, Write, and Meet with Your Legislators.
(See sample letter in Advocacy Kit)
- 5) Call Speaker Salvatore DiMasi (617-722-2500)
Call Sen. President Therese Murray (617-722-1500)
- 6) Poll Legislators on MPA Provisions & Report Results to MMA.
(See form in Advocacy Kit)
- Mobilize: 7) Recruit Your Supporters to Lobby on the MPA.
(Recruit colleagues, friends, supporters, citizens to lobby)
- 8) Meet with Restaurants and Businesses.
(Explain the benefits and listen to concerns)
- 9) Recruit PTOs/School Groups/Civic Organizations to Lobby.
(Recruit community organizations to lobby Reps. and Sens.)
- Media: 10) Issue Press Release in Support of MPA.
(See sample release in Advocacy Kit)
- 11) Submit Letters to Editor.
(See sample letter in Advocacy Kit)
- 12) Visit Local Editorial Board with Talking Points.
(See summaries, talking points and spreadsheet in Advocacy Kit)
- 13) Hold Events (Community Meeting, Business Leaders, e.g.).
(Generate press and lobbying events based in your community)
- 14) Participate in Regional Press Events with Patrick/Murray Administration.
(Contact MMA if you are interested and we will coordinate)

Please E-Mail Legislative Updates and Questions to John Robertson at jrobertson@mma.org

Please E-Mail Press/Media Updates and Questions to Pat Mikes at pmikes@mma.org

Thank You!

Massachusetts Municipal Association

Municipal Partnership Act *Advocacy Kit*

Request for Endorsement by Individual Municipal Officials

The MMA and the Governor are working to compile a comprehensive list of all official endorsements of the Municipal Partnership Act. This list will be published on a special website <http://devalpatrick.com/mpa.php> dedicated to the partnership act and will be referenced in future advocacy efforts.

With this request, we are seeking endorsements by *individual* municipal officials, including Mayors, City and Town Councillors, Selectmen and other elected and appointed officials who support the Partnership Act. We have included separately in this advocacy kit a model Resolution for councils, boards and other local government bodies to express their collective support for the Partnership Act.

This Request for Endorsement is a small part of an overall advocacy strategy to significantly boost the visibility and pressure to pass the full Partnership Act.

We want to make sure that we have missed no one, so even if you know that we know you support the Municipal Partnership Act, please fax this form back to us as soon as you can at (617) 695-1314.

“Yes, I endorse the full Municipal Partnership Act.”

Name: _____

Title: _____

Municipality: _____

If you have any questions or would like to be part of a media event in your city or town or in the area, please contact MMA Deputy Legislative Director John Robertson at jrobertson@mma.org if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Contact information:

Massachusetts Municipal Association

One Winthrop Square

Boston, MA 02110

Tel. 617-426-7272 • Fax 617-695-1314 • www.mma.org

Massachusetts Municipal Association

Municipal Partnership Act *Advocacy Kit*

Model Municipal Partnership Act Resolution for Local Adoption

Resolution in Support of the Municipal Partnership Act

Whereas, In order for the residents and the economy of Massachusetts to prosper and thrive, it is essential that the Commonwealth establish an enduring state-local financial relationship that ensures sufficient and stable revenue sources to appropriately and adequately fund all essential local government services and responsibilities, including public safety, public works, public education and the full range of vital local government activities and obligations;

Whereas, the sound financial health of cities and towns and the high quality of municipal and school services are necessary for the growth of the knowledge-based Massachusetts economy and the well-being of residents and businesses;

Whereas, the great majority of cities and towns have not financially recovered from the deep and painful municipal and school aid cuts imposed in fiscal 2003 and fiscal 2004 that resulted in widespread reductions and cutbacks in local services and the municipal workforce;

Whereas, reliance on the regressive property tax has increased to historic levels, and has placed a heavy property tax burden on low- and moderate-income homeowners, especially seniors and those on fixed incomes, and the communities of the Commonwealth should not be forced to further their reliance on the property tax, which is only major source of tax revenue granted to local government;

Whereas, the (City/Town of _____), and cities and towns across the Commonwealth are facing structural budget shortfalls this year and into the future because existing municipal revenues and current levels of local aid are inadequate to maintain services and fund the high growth in unavoidable local costs, including health insurance for public employees and retirees, special education for disabled students, and rising fuel and energy expenses; and

Whereas, cities and towns in Massachusetts have far less autonomy under state law to manage local revenues and costs than other states;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the (City/Town of _____) hereby endorses the Municipal Partnership Act, and calls on the Massachusetts Legislature to enact the full scope of the bill this year, as this municipal partnership legislation would give cities and towns practical and meaningful tools to close local budget shortfalls and enhance stability in municipal and school services; and

Be It Further Resolved, that meaningful partnership legislation must include both substantial revenue self-reliance measures referenced in the next provision, as well as strong administrative cost-cutting opportunities in the areas of health insurance and pension funding as proposed by the Governor in the Municipal Partnership Act filed in February; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Municipal Partnership Act passed by the Legislature must include the following revenue provisions: a local option sales tax on meals of up to 2 percent, a local option expansion of the room occupancy excise of an additional 1 percent, and closing the telecommunications property tax loophole in state law to eliminate the special ability of telecommunications companies to avoid appropriate local taxation and shift this burden onto other taxpayers and communities; and

Be it Further Resolved, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Honorable Members of the Senate and House of Representatives for the (City/Town of _____) and be placed in the public record.

This Resolution is hereby adopted by the (name of body) on (date).

>>add signatures<<

>>add municipal seal<<